

**Declare green stand, MNS challenges politicians**  
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**By ISABELLE LAI**

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) has for the first time in its 73-year history challenged politicians to declare their "green stand" in the upcoming general election.

Its [president Prof Dr Maketab Mohamed](#) said the society would encourage the public to support political parties and candidates who pledged to protect the environment by addressing weaknesses in the forest management system.

He said MNS had compiled 10 requests for change, including a policy change to implement mandatory public consultation before degazettement or conversion of any forest reserve.

Other requests include requiring consent from local communities for clearing and logging within permanent forest reserves and state land forests, which should be done in compliance with existing plans such as the National Physical Plan and the Central Forest Spine masterplan.

"We see that the forests, whether under Barisan Nasional or Pakatan Rakyat, are still being cleared. We want an environmental policy that will halt unsustainable development," he told a press conference here on Tuesday.

MNS [executive director Mohamed Shah Redza Hussein](#) said it would analyse the manifestos of each political party as well as candidates at the federal and state levels and make its results known to the public.

"With 4,000 members, we managed within a short time to mobilise almost 90,000 signatures for our Belum-Temengor campaign. We speak with the voice of our grassroots supporters," he said, adding that sustainable development and environmental conservation were important issues to voters today.

MNS conservation head Balu Perumal pointed out that every state has been troubled by environmental woes for decades.

"The problem is not localised, it is a big problem happening throughout the country. In order for us to move forward, we need to protect the natural treasures we have left, not keep exhausting our resources," he stressed.

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